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LANE DENIES SEEKING CULT'S SECRET FUNDS

Lawyer Says He Did Not Travel to Switzerland to Get at Bank Accounts of Jones Sect

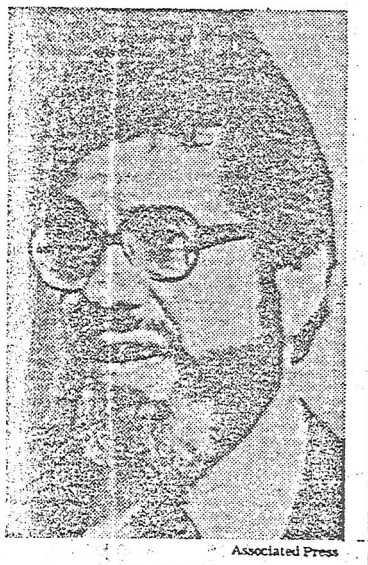
By DAVID BINDER
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16 — Mark Lane, the lawyer whose client was the Rev. Jim Jones of the People's Temple sect in Jonestown, Guyana, said today that he had not made any effort to seek access to the sect's secret assets in Swiss banks.

Denying reports received yesterday by the Department of Justice, Mr. Lane said he had not gone to Switzerland to get at the secret accounts.

In a telphone interview from his home in Memphis, where he arrived last night from a four-day trip to Paris, Mr. Lane said that his only knowledge of the secret funds came from documents and oral statements by Terri Buford, another of his clients, who had been a close aide to Mr. Jones until she defected from the cult last September.

Mr. Lane said that, according to Miss



Associated Press

Mark Lane

Buford, the People's Temple had accumulated $7.5 million, the bulk of which was deposited in a Swiss bank account in Panama, while less than $1 million was kept in a second account in Zurich.

He said Miss Buford had told him the Panama account had been opened several months ago by Tim Stoen, a San Francisco lawyer and former legal and financial aide to the People's Temple.

After studying the documents made available by Miss Buford, Mr. Lane said, he believed the funds had been deposited in the name of an elderly woman member of the cult.

He also said he believed that, on the assumption the woman died along with more than 900 other members of the cult in Jonestown on Nov. 18, her son, who lives in the United States, was the legal heir to the funds.

Mr. Lane said he had advised the presumed heir to retain a lawyer and, through him, to order the secret Swiss accounts to be frozen. The son asked Mr. Lane to do this for him, he said, and he subsequently cabled the Swiss banks in Panama and Zurich to notify them of the precarious legal status of the funds and to ask the banks to guard the funds until a United States court determined how to dispose of them.

Funds for Victims' Families

Mr. Lane said he had undertaken this action only on condition that some of the funds would be retained for families of the victims of the mass deaths in Jonestown, and that the presumed heir agreed to this.

Mr. Lane also said he had turned over documents of the Jonestown commune's bank account to a United States attorney in San Francisco on Dec. 6 in the presence of Miss Buford and representatives of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Secret Service.

This was his last action regarding the funds, he said.

Mr. Lane added that the presumed heir had left a message with his Memphis office this week, while Mr. Lane was in Paris, saying that he had retained a lawyer.

Mr. Lane said the report alleging that he and Miss Buford had gone to Switzerland was the "third time" that Federal officials had transmitted false information about him to the public, and added that he planned to take action to find out who in the Federal Government was responsible for spreading false information about him.

He also said that he had not "disappeared" while he was in Paris, and that he had been interviewed by scores of French and American journalists during his stay. He was not in touch with Federal officials during this period, he said.